SHIRE POLICY 1.3
Service Level Complaints Handling

Responsible Department:	Office of the CEO
Responsible Business Unit:	Governance
Date of Review:	15 July 2026
Council Resolution:	140726

1. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this Policy is to provide a clear, consistent and accessible framework for managing service-level complaints received by the Shire of Chittering (the Shire).

The Policy supports transparent and accountable complaint handling, while using complaints as an opportunity to improve service delivery and community confidence.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to service-level complaints made to the Shire of Chittering about Shire services, customer service interactions, operational activities, or actions taken in delivery Shire services.

This policy does not apply to service requests, general enquiries, statutory appeals or objections, Freedom of Information applications, Public Interest Disclosures, petitions, Council Member conduct matters, employee misconduct or disciplinary matters, or any matter required to be dealt with under another legislative or formal review process.

Where a matter falls outside this Policy, the Shire will direct the person to the appropriate process where possible.

3. DEFINITIONS

Anonymous Complaint *means a complaint lodged where the complainant does not provide their name or contact details, or does not provide sufficient information for the Shire to identify or contact them.*

Complainant means a person or entity who lodges a complaint with the Shire.

Complaint means an expression of dissatisfaction made to, or about, the Shire relating to its services, operations, actions, decisions, or complaint handling, where a response or resolution is expected or legally required.

Service Level Complaint means a complaint relating to the standard, timeliness, quality or delivery of a Shire service, customer service interaction or operational activity.

Service Request means a request for the Shire to provide a service or take action in relation to a matter, product or service administered by the Shire.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

The Shire is committed to managing service-level complaints in a fair, respectful, accessible and timely manner.

Complaints will be treated as an opportunity to resolve issues, improve service delivery and strengthen public confidence in the Shire's operations.

The Shire will:

- receive and assess complaints without bias or recrimination;
- seek to resolve complaints at the earliest appropriate opportunity;
- provide accessible options for lodging complaints, including assistance where required;
- keep complainants informed where further investigation is required;
- provide clear reasons for complaint outcomes where appropriate;
- advise complainants of available review options where they remain dissatisfied;
- record complaints in accordance with the Shire's record keeping requirements; and
- use complaint information to identify service improvements, trends and recurring issues.

Where a matter falls outside this Policy, the Shire will, where possible, direct the person to the appropriate process, agency or review pathway.

Where a complaint raises a significant service, governance, safety, legal or reputational issue, it will be escalated in accordance with the Shire's internal processes.

4.1. Anonymous Complaints

The Shire may consider anonymous complaints where sufficient information is provided to allow the matter to be assessed or investigated.

Anonymous complaints may be investigated where they raise a matter involving public health or safety, environmental risk, statutory non-compliance, potential misconduct, breach of an approval, licence or permit, or another matter requiring action by the Shire.

Anonymous complaints that do not provide sufficient information, or do not raise a matter requiring further action, may not be investigated.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring the implementation of this Policy and that appropriate systems are in place for the management, escalation and review of service-level complaints.

Governance is responsible for maintaining oversight of the complaint handling framework, including the Complaint Register, supporting procedures, reporting requirements and compliance with this Policy.

Managers and Supervisors are responsible for ensuring complaints within their business area are assessed, responded to and escalated where required, and that staff manage complaints in accordance with this Policy and relevant procedures.

All staff are responsible for receiving and managing complaints professionally, seeking early resolution where appropriate, maintaining confidentiality, recording complaints correctly, and escalating matters where required.

6. COMPLIANCE

Legislation	*Local Government Act 1995* *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996* *Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003* *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003* *State Records Act 2000* *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*
Industry	Ombudsman Western Australia – Guidelines for Complaint Handling Australian Standard – AS10002:2022 – Guidelines for complaint management in organisations
Organisational Documents	Shire Policy 1.5 – Record Keeping Shire Policy 3.1 – Equal Employment Opportunity Disability Access and Inclusion Plan Code of Conduct – Council Members, Committee Members and Candidates Code of Conduct – Employee, Volunteer and Contractor Delegated Authority Register Complaints Management Procedure Shire of Chittering Customer Service Charter
Strategic Alignment	Communities Connected

7. ADMINISTRATION

Review Cycle	Every 3 years	**Next Review Due**	July 2029
Policy Owner	Chief Executive Officer		

Version	Decision Ref	Date	Change
1.0	Unknown	15/04/2009	Initial adoption
2.0	100512	16/05/2012	Review
3.0	140513	15/05/2013	Review
4.0	140614	25/06/2014	Review
5.0	120615	17/06/2015	Review
6.0	100819	21/08/2019	Review
7.0	160620	17/06/2020	Amendment
8.0	130722	20/07/2022	Amendment
9.0	151022	19/10/2022	Amendment
10.0	210326	18/03/2026	Review
11.0	140726	15/07/2026	Amendment and Review